



Purpose: For Decision

Committee report

Committee	CABINET
Date	14 FEBRUARY 2019
Title	INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE SERVICE PROVISION
Report of	DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Full Council at its meeting of 16 January 2019 received and considered a petition regarding funding to the Isle of Wight Law Centre. Following debate, the resolution of the council was to request that Cabinet review the funding to the Law Centre.
2. At the same meeting, the council also considered a related motion in respect of the council's current procurement process for the provision of information, advice and guidance services. Following debate, the resolution of the council was to "urge the administration to ensure that its procurement practices are open, transparent and lawful, delivering value for money for islanders and ensuring that the necessary range of legal and other advice is available to those who have access to it currently through the Law Centre and other providers".
3. This paper therefore considers the issues at hand with regards to the current funding arrangements with the Law Centre and the related procurement process to enable Cabinet to agree a way forward to secure a contract for the provision of Information, advice and guidance (IAG) services.
4. Cabinet is recommended to continue with the current procurement process.

BACKGROUND

5. The council currently has in place a strategic partnership arrangement for the provision of IAG services to members of the public with Islehelp Community Interest Company (CIC). IAG services provide help to those in need of assistance, often the most vulnerable in society, with problems such as dealing with debt, welfare benefits, housing needs, employment and many other types of welfare and social care enquiries. Such services play a vital role in empowering people to resolve problems for themselves as well as preventing escalation; reducing any unnecessary distress and can often result in queries being resolved at the first point of contact without unnecessary entry into public services. IAG services are discretionary, but it is recognised that such provision underpins the council's delivery of its statutory obligations and can avoid significant costs to public services.
6. For a number of years, the council has engaged with the Island's voluntary sector in the delivery of IAG services, mainly through grant provision. In 2013, as a result of central government funding, a consortium of providers from the Island's voluntary sector were successful in securing funding to establish a consortium for the provision of IAG services. This consortium consists of the Isle of Wight Citizens Advice Bureau, Age UK Isle of Wight, People Matter IW, the Law Centre Isle of Wight, Community Action Isle of Wight and the FootPrint Trust. This consortium, known as Islehelp CIC and by working together, has developed improved access to IAG services that best suits the needs of people who require such assistance. In particular, as a result of such collaboration it has been able to reduce partner costs and duplication of service provision, as well as establishing common standards of service delivery.
7. Prior to the cessation of central government grant funding in 2015, the then administration agreed to enter into a formal strategic partnership arrangement with Islehelp CIC for a period of three years with an option to extend for a further year. This strategic partnership was operated through grant provisions open to the council (£500,000 over the three initial financial years). This was to enable the council and Islehelp to build a longer term strategy for IAG service provision and to afford opportunity for the consortium to become financially sustainable without the need for reliance on public funding, by seeking alternative funding streams not available to the council. Under this partnership agreement, Islehelp operated from its central office at 7 High Street, Newport, as the central point of reference for IAG services, although many of the partner organisations retained their own office bases for the purposes of their day to day business operations.

8. An annual report on the progress of the strategic partnership was presented to Cabinet at their meeting of 14 September 2017. This reinforced the importance of IAG services, particularly in light of ongoing and increasing demand following implementation of the Care Act 2014 and anticipated demand during the roll out of universal credit following the governments welfare reform. The report also acknowledged that unfortunately, while it had been possible for the Islehelp consortium to access some alternative funding streams, there was not a sufficient pipeline of funding that would enable them to become self-financing without ongoing financial support from the council. Cabinet agreed for the strategic partnership to be extended for a further year in accordance with the terms of the partnership arrangement (at a cost of £151,200) to allow for the continued provision of IAG services while modelling and evaluating the future needs to inform a commissioning strategy and resultant procurement process into the future.
9. Since then, a key outcome that has been delivered as a result of this strategic partnership is the recent establishment of co-located IAG services within the main reception area of County Hall, making it even easier for people to get all the information and advice they need in one place. This is closely aligned to the council's stated aspirations and ambition to develop a one public service for the Island. However, not all aspects of IAG provision through the strategic partnership are currently represented within the new setting, namely those relating to housing advice, court advocacy and legal representative work as is provided through the Law Centre.
10. The current strategic partnership arrangements will expire on 30 June 2019. Given that there will be a continued need for public funding to be made available to fund IAG services, grant provisions are no longer considered to be the most appropriate means of funding. Having determined what service requirements are and determined a commissioning strategy to secure those services, a procurement exercise has now been entered into. The procurement route has been selected as it now enables the council to clearly set out its requirements for service provision and will initiate a contractual relationship in which there are established supplier/purchaser expectations in the delivery of those services. Due to the lifetime value of the proposed contract and in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, it has been necessary to undertake a full competitive tender process.
11. The strategic partnership with Islehelp CIS automatically expires on 30 June 2019, and the additional grant funding arrangements with the Law Centre will also expire on this date. The council chose to provide formal notice to the incumbent providers to ensure that there was no confusion and that they were aware that with effect from 30 June 2019. their current arrangements with the council would end.
12. The tender process for IAG services went live on 21 December 2018 and has been advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union, through the council's website and on the south east business portal as is required. The closing date is 22 February 2019. The contract period of the new service will be from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2022, with an option to extend for a further two years. The lifetime contract value is £1,105,000. There has been no reduction in funding as part of the tender process.

13. The tender specification for the services has been designed as far as is possible to be outcome based, rather than a prescriptive set of requirements for service delivery in order for potential providers to offer creative and innovative solutions in the provision of IAG services. This incorporated feedback following public consultation. This service was designed to reflect what the council has been told by local people that they want from IAG services. The detailed specification is attached as Appendix A for information.
14. Since formal notice was provided to the current providers the incumbent providers, the Law Centre, as a member of the Islehelp consortium has made representations directly to all members and latterly through a petition to Full Council at its meeting of 16 January 2019, regarding the funding arrangements for the housing advice, court advocacy and legal representation work that the Law Centre currently provide. Full Council resolved that Cabinet be asked to review the funding to the Law Centre.
15. Additionally, by way of motion to Full Council at the same meeting, members of the chamber debated whether or not the procurement process currently in operation for the provision of IAG services would result in a loss of funding to the Law Centre as a result of the tender specification in its current format. It was further suggested that due to the specialist and independent nature of the services provided by the Law Centre, they are the only such provider on the Isle of Wight. It was resolved by Full Council that Cabinet be asked to ensure that its procurement processes are open, transparent and lawful, delivering value for money for islanders and ensuring that the necessary range of legal and other advice is available to those who have access to it currently through the Law Centre and other providers.
16. As a result of the resolutions made at the Full Council meeting of 16 January 2019, in respect of the funding for the Law Centre and current procurement exercise, it was determined necessary to formally pause the current procurement process in order to provide Cabinet with the opportunity to review the situation as requested by Full Council and to decide on the way forward for the IAG contract.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

17. The council's corporate plan, approved by Full Council at its meeting of 18 October 2017, sets out 12 outcome measures of success, including the aim for our community needs to be met by the best public services possible while also balancing the need for a financially balanced and sustainable council. In doing so, our guiding principles are also set out in the council's agreed corporate values, particularly those of engaging with our partners to maximise integrated working; being sensitive to our local needs and concerns; putting our customers and our community at the heart as well as being efficient and effective in everything we do and spending money wisely.

CONSULTATION

18. As a report that is designed to assist Cabinet in determining a way forward in the delivery of IAG service provision for the council, no formal consultation is required or has been undertaken. However, Full Council at its meeting of 16 January 2019 provided resolution that Cabinet reviews the funding arrangements for the Law Centre and the current procurement process in the commissioning of future IAG service provision. The considerations of Full Council have been taken into account in presenting the options open to members and in making recommendation of the preferred option.
19. To assist with the preparation of the tender specification of IAG services, public consultation was undertaken. As a result, the service was designed to reflect what the council has been told by local people what they want from IAG service provision.
20. To prevent any potential disruption to the ongoing provision of IAG services beyond 30 June 2019, when the current arrangements come to an end and not to prolong the concerns of existing providers and members of the public as a result of representations made, it was considered important to bring a report to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity to seek resolution. Given that it was not possible to provide the requisite period of notice on the council's forward plan that a report would be brought before Cabinet at this meeting, in accordance with the council's constitution, the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee has been consulted on the need for this report to come forward as an urgent matter.
21. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee has commented that "the vote at Full Council was overwhelmingly in favour of a review by cabinet of funding to the Law Centre. Consideration by cabinet at its meeting on 14 February 2019 would, I believe, be in keeping with this resolution. I am therefore supportive of this being added to the council forward plan in the way described to allow this to happen".

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

22. IAG services under the current strategic partnership with Islehelp CIC of which the Law Centre is a member, equates to a total of £221,200 per annum. Within this amount, there is provision for three core grant elements:
 - Information, advice and guidance core funding of £151,200
 - Housing related advice and support funding of £60,000
 - Housing court desk advocacy and legal representation funding of £10,000
23. There is on-going budgetary provision within the same financial envelope and as such, there is no reduction in the available funding to support the current procurement process in the commissioning of a new contract for the provision of IAG services.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

24. Procurement is the process of acquiring goods, works and services from a third party. Public sector procurement is governed by the Public Contract Regulations 2015 which are the United Kingdom's regulations that implement the EU Public Procurement Directives 2014. Where procurements are not covered by the United Kingdom's regulations, they are still subject to the council's own contract standing orders and EU treaty principles.
25. Contracts with an estimated lifetime value above the following thresholds are subject to the regulations set out above.

Category of contract	Threshold	Contract examples
Services	£181,302	Consultancy, cleaning services, maintenance, ICT services
Goods	£181,302	Stationery, uniform, furniture, machinery, ICT equipment
Schedule 3 services	£615,278	Health and social work services, legal services, guidance services, hospital services, education services
Works	£4,551,413	Civil engineering works, building construction

26. The nature of the IAG service provision means that it falls within Schedule 3 of the regulations and as the anticipated lifetime value of the contract for IAG services is £1,105,000, this also means that the procurement process is subject to the regulations set out and must be conducted in accordance with the rules associated with them.
27. Services that fall within Schedule 3 of the regulations have a higher threshold than standard service contracts as they are thought to attract less cross border interest and are subject to what is referred to as a light touch regime (LTR). In practical terms, this means that contracting authorities only need to apply certain key parts of the full scope of the regulations, namely where contract opportunities are advertised and how contracts are awarded. The LTR allows contracting authorities to set its own evaluation methodology and can design its own procurement process on the basis that they must be fair, open, transparent and non-discriminatory.
28. Where the letting of any contract falls below the thresholds set out above, the council's own contract standing orders then apply. Under the contract standing orders, the following rules are to be adhered to:

Estimated lifetime value of contract	Competition requirements	Advertising requirements
Below £10,000	No formal competition required, although quotes can be sought in order to demonstrate best value.	No advert required.

£10,001 - £25,000	Seek a minimum of three written quotes identified following market research or use a suitable/compliant framework agreement. Agreement as per competition rules of Framework or seek a minimum of three written quotes from an approved supplier list.	No advert required.
£25,000 - £100,000	Formal request for quotation process using the open procedure, or use a suitable/compliant framework agreement. Agreement as per competition rules of framework or seek a minimum of three written quotes from an approved supplier list.	Advertise on council website, south east business portal and contracts finder websites.
£100,000 to the relevant EU threshold	Isle of Wight Council invitation to tender process using the open procedure, or use of a suitable approved/compliant framework or seek a minimum of five written quotes from an approved supplier list.	Advertise on council website, south east business portal and contracts finder websites and consider one industry publication.

29. There are some circumstances where the council's standing orders can be waived. These should only be requested in exceptional circumstances and must meet one of the following criteria and be approved by the council's procurement board:
- (a) There is a genuine emergency (with real and imminent risk to safety).
 - (b) Urgency, not of the council's own making.
 - (c) Collaborative/joint purchasing with another public body.
 - (d) Sole source of supply.
 - (e) Reasons of compatibility.
 - (f) Some other substantial reason.
30. Where contract values exceed the EU thresholds as set out in the Public Contract Regulations above, there is no option to waive any element of a procurement process.
31. In contrast to procurement, grant provisions are open to the council, which allows for a payment to be made to help a recipient (as in this case a charity) with a project or activity this it wishes to support. A grant is usually provided with conditions as to how it can be spent, but the council as the grant funder cannot expect to receive a specified service in return. The relationship therefore is based on mutual bargaining involving reciprocal obligations. This is distinct from entering into a contract with an organisation in which there is legal relationship and obligations on each of the partners. Under a contract, payment is made in return for the delivery of works, goods or services and is defined by a specification and associated contractual terms and conditions.

32. Whether or not to use grant provisions will very much depend on the type of relationship required with an organisation. Within the confines of the strategic partnership with Islehelp, the grant option was utilised for the purposes of supporting the consortium to develop its service offer with help from the local authority, while also providing adequate time for seeking funding opportunities that would enable them to become financially sustainable without reliance on funding from the local authority.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

33. The council, as a public body, is required to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It is not considered that the recommendations and outcome of this report will have an impact on any of the protected characteristics.

OPTIONS

34. Option 1: Continue with the current procurement process for the provision of integrated IAG services in accordance with the tender specification shown in Appendix A.
35. Option 2: Cease the current procurement process, revisit and instigate a new procurement process to make provision for three separate service provisions within the tender specification, namely that of core IAG services; housing advice and court advocacy/legal representation.
36. Option 3: Cease the current procurement process for these services, revisit and instigate two new separate procurement processes, one for housing advice, court desk and legal representation; and another for the core IAG services.
37. Option 4: Cease the current procurement process, revisit and instigate a new procurement process for the provision of core IAG services and utilise the grant funding option open to the council for housing advice, court desk advocacy and legal representation.
38. Option 5: Cease the current procurement process and remain with the current arrangements in place.

RISK MANAGEMENT

39. **Option 1: Continue with the current procurement process for the provision of integrated IAG services in accordance with the tender specification shown in Appendix A.**

40. Competitive procurement is identified as being the cornerstone of the council's procurement strategy, as it is considered to be the fairest way of awarding contracts that will deliver value for money for the council and its community, in the most transparent way possible. In line with the council's ambitions and core values as set out in the Corporate Plan, the council's procurement strategy has four key themes, including the following:
- (a) To use sound procurement and contract management practices and innovative solutions to make savings and achieve value for money, making use of clear and detailed procurement/purchasing data, collaboration and partnership opportunities where appropriate.
 - (b) To use the procurement process to promote sustainability, encourage benefits to society and the economy, providing greater access to Small Medium Enterprises and voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises while minimising damage to the environment through the promotion of social value in contracts.
41. To that end, the council's commissioning strategy for this contract has been built around these principles and seeks to maintain and build upon an integrated approach for IAG service provision across all aspects of IAG services either through a single provider or a consortium of providers bidding collaboratively together. The overarching aim being to best serve the needs of Island residents.
42. If implemented in collaboration with any provider this is considered to support the council to co-ordinate independent IAG through a 'one front door' service provision, reducing any remaining duplication in service provision as well as to increase ease of access to such vital support services. This does not preclude any provider in such a collaboration continuing to operate certain aspects of their services from another location, allowing specialist services to remain independent of the local authority where necessary.
43. A number of supplier engagement events, advertised through the procurement portal were held with the market, prior to commencing the procurement process at which this intended approach was set out and discussed with potential suppliers. There was attendance from a range of interested parties. Unfortunately, the Law Centre did not attend.
44. There is no reduction in the budget available for the provision of IAG services and as such this is not being operated as a purely cost saving procurement exercise. As a Schedule 3 service under the public sector procurement regulations, this also means that it is possible to apply a 'light touch regime' to the procurement process. This allows, within the confines of the requirement to operate a fair, open, transparent and non-discriminatory approach, to determine where contract opportunities are advertised, the procurement process to be adopted and the evaluation criteria for contract award.
45. To that end, this contract has only been advertised through the Official Journal of the European Union, Contracts Finder, the council's website and the south east business portal as is required thus ensuring that there is an appropriate element of open competition but promoting greater opportunity for local providers, voluntary, community organisations and social enterprises to

be engaged in the tendering process. Equally, the nature of the tender specification itself lends itself towards creative and innovative solutions to be put forward either by a single provider or a number of organisations working together collaboratively for the benefit of improving the customer experience in the route between accessing information, advice and guidance and entry into public or other related public services such as court advocacy and legal representation. This is in line with the council's aspirations for a one public service.

46. The procurement process that the council has commenced for the provision of IAG services is fully compliant with the rules and regulations that it must adhere to as a public sector body. From the information available so far through the south east business portal we are able to determine that there have been 23 separate organisations expressing interest in this tender opportunity. They are engaged in the tender process and are asking questions and seeking clarification around the contract and specification proposed. A number of the interested organisations have specifically engaged in relation to the housing advice, court advocacy and legal representation provision. This option will allow proper market testing in order to secure the best possible service for Island residents. As such, this option is the recommended way forward.
47. **Option 2: Cease the current procurement process, revisit and instigate a new procurement process to make provision for three separate service provisions within the tender specification, namely that of core IAG services; housing advice and court advocacy/legal representation.**
48. This option would allow for the specialist elements of service provision to remain separate to the main provision of IAG services. The current service provider is well known and respected by the Island community in its provision of housing advice and court advocacy/legal representation and may remain the only service provider with such expertise on the Isle of Wight. There is no question about the quality of the service provider and there is strong evidence that the nature of the work undertaken avoids significant costs to the local authority as a result but there are potentially some aspects of duplication in IAG support in respect of debt, budgeting and welfare benefits advice. This option would also avoid any perceptions of a lack of independence from local authority services as a result of co-location of IAG services within County Hall although the current tender specification does not preclude an organisation still operating elements of service provision in a separation location if deemed appropriate.
49. The current procurement process would necessitate closure and a new procurement process initiated. The contract value would remain unchanged and as such, would necessitate exactly the same route to market as the current. Although the tender specification would need to be revisited to reflect this change in focus.
50. As set out in option 1 above, the intention of the current commissioning strategy for these services is to secure an integrated and collaborative approach to the provision of IAG services and a 'one door' facility for members of the public. This will avoid the need for those in need of support being re-directed to other sources of help and advice, especially when in crisis. Much progress has already been seen as a result of the co-located IAG service

provision within County Hall in this respect, as well as having reduced duplication of effort across the range of services. By developing common customer standards, this has also reduced confusion about what is available and customers can be easily directed to the support they require straight away. It is considered that there are more benefits to be derived from all aspects of IAG services being delivered in an integrated approach. To separate out the housing advice, court advocacy and legal representation provision elements of the tender specification could hinder the ability to promote and deliver integrated service provision if different providers were awarded contracts for separate elements of service.

51. This approach to procurement is deemed to be compliant with the rules and regulations that must be adhered to as a public sector body. However, it would not be in line with the agreed commissioning strategy that has been adopted for IAG services which is to promote and encourage integrated service provision.
52. It would also incur a significant delay to procurement process for IAG services, require additional officer time to review the tender specification and to instigate a new procurement process and will mean that there is insufficient time to enter into a new contract by the deadline of 1 July 2019 when the existing strategic partnership arrangement comes to an end.
53. There is no option to extend the current strategic partnership and although it could be possible to put in place a new short term contract to cover the intervening period. This would require a waiver to the council's contract standing orders and as set out in the legal implications of this report, waivers are only to be used in accordance with the limited criteria. It could also risk the council being in a position where it has no service provision in place in the intervening period should the incumbent partnership members not wish to enter into such an arrangement. This option is not recommended.
54. **Option 3: Cease the current procurement process for these services, revisit and instigate two new separate procurement processes, one for housing advice; court desk and legal representation and another for the core IAG services.**
55. The current procurement process would necessitate closure, a rewrite of the tender specification and new procurement processes initiated. The current annual value of housing advice, court advocacy and legal representation services is £70,000. On the basis of a similar proposed contract period of three years, with an option to extend up to two further years, this would equate to a lifetime contract value of £350,000. This is below the EU threshold and so the council's contract standing orders can be applied in determining the required procurement process. At this level of contract value, it would however be necessary to instigate an open procurement process as there are no current approved/compliant frameworks or approved supplier list for this area of service provision. Advertising requirements would include the need for the contract opportunity to be notified through the south east business portal and contracts finder websites and consideration given to an industry publication. Consideration could also be given to the potential for this contract award to be subject to a waiver under the provisions within the council's contract standing orders although as set out above, these are only to be used in exceptional circumstances.

56. The residual lifetime contract value for the core IAG services would be circa £780,000, thus still in excess of the EU thresholds and would therefore be subject to a full procurement process, necessitating advertising in the Official Journal of the European Union, Contracts Finder, the council's website and the south east business portal.
57. As set out in options 1 and 2 above, the intention of the current commissioning strategy is to secure an integrated and collaborative approach to the provision of IAG services and a 'one door' facility for members of the public. This will avoid the need for those in need of support being re-directed to other sources of help and advice, especially when in crisis. Much progress has already been seen as a result of the co-located IAG service provision within County Hall in this respect, as well as having reduced duplication of effort across the range of services. By developing common customer standards, this has also reduced confusion about what is available and customers can be easily directed to the support they require straight away. It is considered that there are more benefits to be derived from all aspects of IAG services being delivered in an integrated approach. To separate out the housing advice, court advocacy and legal representation provision elements of the tender specification could hinder the ability to promote and deliver integrated service provision if different providers were awarded contracts for separate elements of service.
58. This approach to procurement is deemed to be compliant with the rules and regulations that it must adhere to as a public sector body. However, it would again, not be in line with the agreed commissioning strategy that has been adopted for IAG services which is to promote and encourage integrated service provision.
59. It would also incur a significant delay to procurement process for IAG services, require additional officer time to review the tender specification and to instigate a new procurement process and will mean that there is insufficient time to enter into a new contract by the deadline of 1 July 2019 when the existing strategic partnership arrangement comes to an end.
60. There is no option to extend the current strategic partnership and although it could be possible to put in place a new short term contract to cover the intervening period. This would require a waiver to the council's contract standing orders and as set out in the legal implications of this report, waivers are only to be used in accordance with the limited criteria. It could also risk the council being in a position where it has no service provision in place in the intervening period should the incumbent partnership members not wish to enter into such an arrangement. This option is not recommended.
61. **Option 4: Cease the current procurement process, revisit and instigate a new procurement process for the provision of core IAG services and utilise the grant funding option open to the council for housing advice, court desk advocacy and legal representation.**

62. As set out in the legal implications of this report, grant funding is an option open to the council in certain circumstances. A grant arrangement allows for a payment to be made to a recipient (in this case a charity), with a project or activity that the council wishes to support. Any such grant would need to be made with conditions as to how it could be spent, but the council would not be able to specify the service required or expect to receive a service in return.
63. This means that the council would have no guarantee or control in terms of the service it requires from the recipient of the grant. Utilising a procurement process in contrast enables the council to enter into a contractual relationship with a supplier in which there are legal obligations placed upon each of the partners, expectations of service provision set out and the terms and conditions of the purchaser/supplier relationship agreed.
64. Again, as set out in options 1, 2 and 3 above, the intention of the current commissioning strategy is to secure an integrated and collaborative approach to the provision of IAG services and a “one door” facility for members of the public. This will avoid the need for those in need of support being re-directed to other sources of help and advice, especially when in crisis. Much progress has already been seen as a result of the co-located IAG service provision within County Hall in this respect, as well as having reduced duplication of effort across the range of services. By developing common customer standards, this has also reduced confusion about what is available and customers can be easily directed to the support they require straight away. It is considered that there are more benefits to be derived from all aspects of IAG services being delivered in an integrated approach. To separate out the housing advice, court advocacy and legal representation provision elements of the tender specification could hinder the ability to promote and deliver integrated service provision if different providers were awarded contracts for separate elements of service.
65. It would also incur a significant delay to procurement process for core IAG services, require additional officer time to review the tender specification and to instigate a new procurement process and will mean that there is insufficient time to enter into a new contract by the deadline of 1 July 2019 when the existing strategic partnership arrangement comes to an end.
66. There is no option to extend the current strategic partnership and although it could be possible to put in place a new short term contract to cover the intervening period. This would require a waiver to the council's contract standing orders and as set out in the legal implications of this report, waivers are only to be used in accordance with the limited criteria. It could also risk the council being in a position where it has no service provision in place in the intervening period should the incumbent partnership members not wish to enter into such an arrangement. This option is not recommended.
67. **Option 5: Cease the current procurement process and remain with the current arrangements in place.**
68. The existing strategic partnership contractual arrangements cease with effect from 30 June 2019. There is no provision for any further extension. Doing nothing therefore is not an option for members and one of the above options must be instigated in order to determine a way forward for the future provision of IAG services. This option therefore is not recommended.

EVALUATION

69. The provision of IAG services, while a discretionary service, is acknowledged as being vital in underpinning the delivery of the council's statutory duties and is an essential means by which to avoid unnecessary entry into public services. Current provision has evolved over a period of time into a strategic partnership that enables voluntary sector and community organisations to work collaboratively alongside the local authority in delivering a 'one door' approach to service provision for Island residents who require support and assistance.
70. The current strategic partnership grant arrangements, including the housing related support and court desk advocacy and legal representation awards come to an end with effect from 30 June 2019. It had been determined that the commissioning strategy for this service provision would be to undertake a procurement process. In order to satisfy the council's statutory obligations under the Public Contract Regulations 2015, due to the lifetime value of the contract, it has been necessary to undertake a full procurement exercise to secure the required service. An advertised procurement exercise is now underway for that purpose. The basis of the tender specification continues with the spirit of integrated and collaborative service provision established by the strategic partnership with Islehelp CIC and as a result of public consultation in order to further improve both the service available to Island residents and the ability to resolve problems at first point of contact, thus reducing the need for entry to other services wherever possible. However, by way of petition and a motion to Full Council, challenge has been made to the current procurement process and Cabinet have been requested to review both the funding to the Law Centre and the procurement process in the letting of a contract for IAG services.
71. To enable cabinet to fully review this situation as requested by Full Council, a hold has been placed on the current procurement process until a decision has been made as to the best way forward for the future provision of IAG services.
72. Cabinet have been provided with five possible options to consider as a way forward. All options are compliant with the council's statutory obligations and specifically where appropriate under the Public Contract Regulations 2015. Option one however is considered to be the preferred option as being the most open, fair and transparent process that will ensure that it is possible to secure value for money to the council and its community and is in line with what our public have said they want to see from IAG service provision. It is also in line with the council's aspirations to become a one public service.

RECOMMENDATION

73. **Option 1: Continue with the current procurement process for the provision of integrated IAG services in accordance with the tender specification shown in Appendix A.**

APPENDICES ATTACHED

74. [Appendix A](#): Tender specification for information, advice and guidance service provision for the Isle of Wight Council.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

75. Full Council Meeting Agenda, Papers and Minutes:16 January 2019
<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Meetings/committees/mod-council/16-1-19/agenda.pdf?>

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Meetings/committees/mod-council/16-1-19/minutes.pdf>
76. Isle of Wight Council Procurement Strategy
<https://www.iow.gov.uk/azservices/documents/1472-Isle-of-Wight-Council-Procurement-Strategy-16-19-FINAL.pdf>
77. Corporate Plan 2017 - 2020
<https://www.iow.gov.uk/documentlibrary/view/corporate-plan-2017-2020>
78. Isle of Wight Council Executive paper 10 February 2015
<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Meetings/committees/Executive/10-2-15/Paper%20F.pdf>
79. Isle of Wight Council Executive paper 14 May 2015
<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Meetings/committees/Executive/14-5-15/PAPER%20E.pdf>
80. Isle of Wight Council Cabinet report paper 14 September 2017
<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Meetings/committees/cabinet/14-9-17/PAPER%20G.pdf>

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